

Interagency Human Trafficking Task Force
Data Collection and Information Sharing Subcommittee Meeting
October 15, 2012
Convened at 9:00 am

Members present: Amy Farrell (co-chair), Chris Carroll, Susan Goldfarb, Lori Ann Bertram

Members absent: Chief Tom Pasquarello (co-chair), David Carbin, Mike Coelho

Massachusetts Attorneys General Staff Present: Britte McBride, Deborah Bercovitch

Open meeting with group discussion of goals of protocol – the use of the mandated reporter framework seems appropriate for protocol guiding screening and sharing of information for minors. The group reviewed the protocol developed by the SEEN coalition. The group indicated a needs to articulate that human trafficking case worker as specified in the state legislation is not an exception to the mandated reporter requirements.

The group also suggested that our subcommittee could recommend that certain agencies such as prosecutors make it a policy to have non-mandated reporters file 51A in the case of a minor sex trafficking victim.

Development of screening tools steps:

Step 1: recognition – the group felt it was important for our subcommittee to recommend that some screening (whether the use of the whole screening tool or taking some questions from the tool) be incorporated into everyone's intake/basic screening practice. This allows some basic questions to be asked of everyone whether or not there is any specific indication of trafficking. The group felt it would be important for our recommendations to note that screening would be more effective to improve identification of human trafficking if some basic questions from this tool could be incorporated into existing tools/procedures that agencies use with clients/contacts instead of being an additional check list that might only get used occasionally. The group suggested we might identify the top three questions that would lead to further screening. Suggestions include:

1. Has anyone forced you to do something that you don't want to do?
2. Has anyone hurt or tried to hurt you?
3. Have you ever exchanged sex for food, clothing, shelter or money?
4. Do you ever feel like you cannot leave your job or are being forced to work?

The group discussed the fact that the protocol could either specify these questions as red flags that are indicators or specify that providers ask specific questions everyone.

Step 2: Who to inform

The group thought it would be helpful for our recommendations to specify a standing group of providers/agencies that would act in the capacity similar to the multi-disciplinary team in the SEEN/CSEC model. In this model each county might have a coordinator who was informed about every identified potential child and adult human trafficking victim.

Since the group only got through a discussion of the first few steps of the protocol we agreed that it would be helpful to follow the basic model of the SEEN protocol and modify it as needed for labor trafficking and adult trafficking. Amy Farrell will take a first step at outlining the draft protocol for the group to respond/react to at the next meeting.

The next meeting date is November meeting will be held on the 19th from 9:00 – 10:30 at the Division of Professional Licensure.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

Potential Child Trafficking Screening and Information Sharing Protocol Adapted from SEEN Protocol

Step 1: Screening

- Youth who raise concern about being victim of trafficking or who provider/agent thinks may be potential victim of sex or labor trafficking based on red flags or basic questions outlined in this protocol should be asked the full list of screening questions from the proposed child trafficking screening tool.

Step 2: Reporting potential victimization

- If the provider or agent suspects a child may be a victim of labor or sex trafficking he or she should file a suspected child abuse report (51A) with DCF.
- At a minimum any child involved in prostitution or who has exchanged sex for money, shelter, food or drugs should be reported to DCF.
- A human trafficking case coordinator in the county should be notified about the 51A report. *(note: this requires the group recommending the development of such a coordinator in each county, maybe associated with the DA's office?)*

Step 3: DCF review and referral

- DCF will review each 51A report and make discretionary referrals to the DA when human trafficking is suspected.
- If there are concerns about the child's caretaker, DCF may also screen for investigation.

Step 4: DA referral and reporting

- The DA will receive referral and conduct discretionary review.
- The DA referral will also be sent to the human trafficking case coordinator in the county.

Step 5: Notification to and action of multi-disciplinary team

- The human trafficking case coordinator (or DA's office) will contact key members of a multi-disciplinary team established in each county to respond to human trafficking of minors.
- The multi-disciplinary team will conference to share information that they have about the victim's involvement in or risk for human trafficking and establish if any other agencies have contact with the minor victim.

- The team will develop a plan of action for the victim based on their immediate and long term needs including a formal assessment and where needed assistance with housing, mental health services, medical services, legal advocacy, safety planning and education.

Notes:

- The steps in this draft protocol outline do not include guidance for a person who screened a victim that is immediate need of services and safety planning.
- It not clear where the victim is during these steps or the degree of agency a victim has in making decisions about their needs and wants.